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The Theory of Missions to the Heathen.

A

S E R M O N

AT THE

ORDINATION OF MR. EDWARD WEBB,

AS A MISSIONARY TO THE HEATHEN.

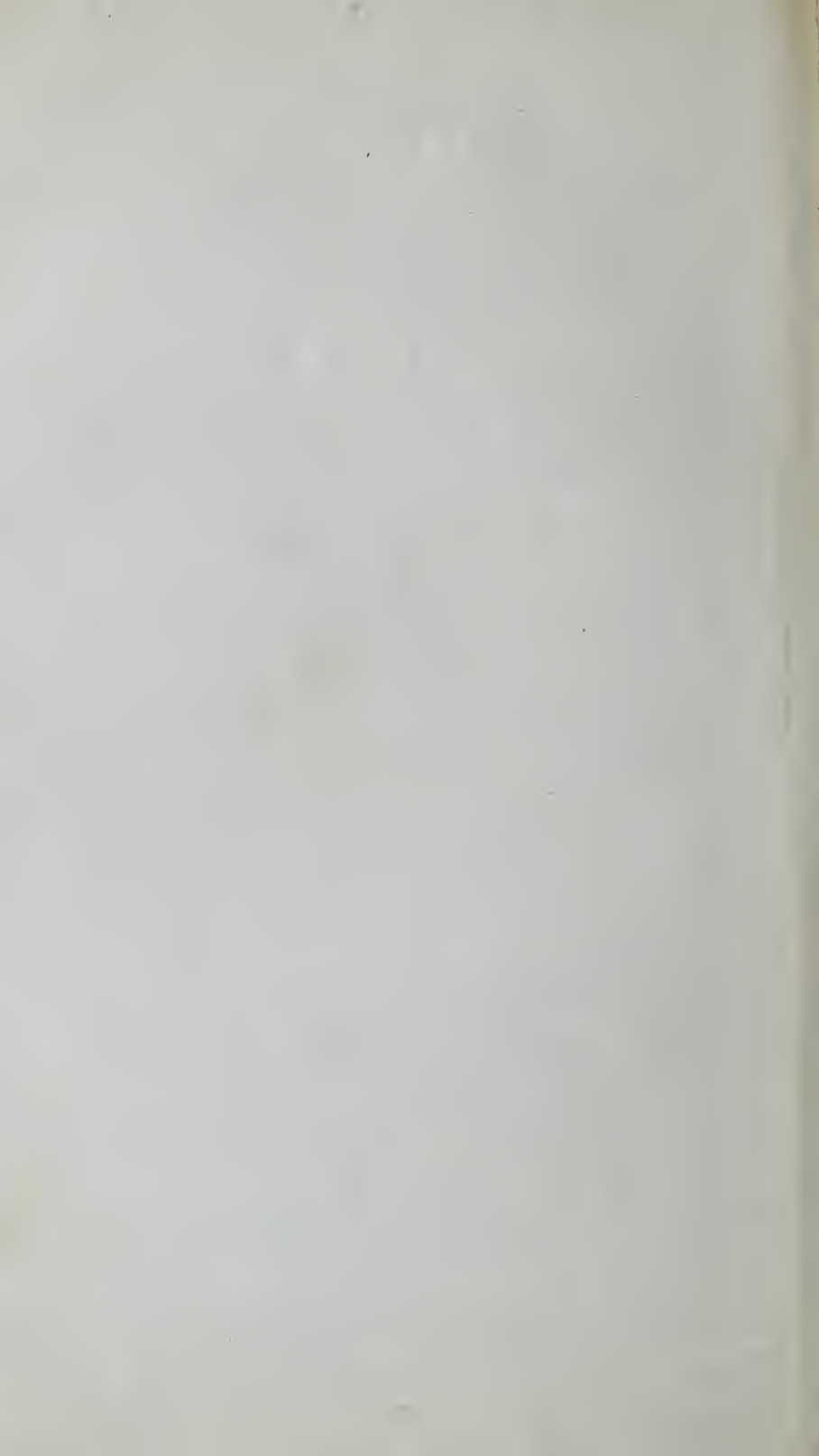
Ware, Mass., Oct. 23, 1845.

BY RUFUS ANDERSON,

One of the Secretaries of the American Board of Commissioners for
Foreign Missions.

B O S T O N :
PRESS OF CROCKER AND BREWSTER,
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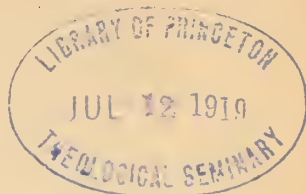
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S E R M O N .

2 CORINTHIANS V : 20 .

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

COMPARING the present period of the church with the apostolical, we come to two very different results respecting our own age. One is, that the facilities enjoyed by us for propagating the gospel throughout the world, are vastly greater than those enjoyed by the apostles. The other is, that it is far more difficult now, than it was then, to impart a purely spiritual character to missions among the heathen.

As to facilities, we have the advantage of the apostles in all respects, except the gift of tongues. The world, as a whole, was never so open to the preacher of the gospel since the introduction of the Christian dispensation. The civilization, too, that is connected with modern science, is all connected also with Christianity in some of its forms. I should add, that the civilization which the gospel has conferred upon our own New England is the highest and best, in a religious point of view, the world has yet seen.

But, on the other hand, this very perfection of our own social religious state becomes a formidable hindrance to establishing such purely spiritual missions among heathen nations, as were those of the apostolical times. Not that this is the only hindrance to this result; there are many others, but this is an important one. For, the Christian religion is identified, in all our conceptions of it from our earliest years, with the almost universal diffusion among its professors of the blessings of education, industry, civil liberty, family government, social order, the means of a respectable livelihood, and a well ordered community. Hence *our* idea of piety in converts among the heathen very generally involves the acquisition and possession, to a great extent, of these blessings; and *our* idea of the propagation of the gospel by means of missions is, to an equal extent, *the creation among heathen tribes and nations of a highly improved state of society, such as we ourselves enjoy*. And for this vast intellectual, moral and social transformation we allow but a short time. We expect the first generation of converts to Christianity, even among savages, to come into all our fundamental ideas of morals, manners, political economy, social organization, right, justice, equity; although many of these are ideas which our own community has been ages in acquiring. If we discover that converts under the torrid zone go but half clothed, that they are idle on a soil where a small amount of labor will supply their wants, that they sometimes forget the apostle's cautions to his converts, not to lie one to another, and to steal no more, in communities where the grossest vice scarcely affects the reputation, and that they are slow to adopt our ideas of the rights of man; we at once doubt the genuineness of their conversion, and the faithfulness of their missionary instructors. Nor is it surprising that this feeling is strongest, as it appears to be, in the most enlightened and favored portions of our country; since it is among those whose privilege it is to dwell upon the heights of Zion, that we have the most reason to expect this

feeling, until they shall have reflected maturely on the difference there is between their own circumstances and states of mind, and those of a heathen and barbarous people.

Now the prevalence of these sentiments at home has exerted an influence on all the missions. Nor is the influence new. You see it in the extent to which farmers and mechanics—pious but secular men—were sent, many years ago, along with the missionaries, to assist in reclaiming the savages of the wilderness from the chase and settling them in communities like our own—a practice now nearly discontinued, except where the expense is borne by the national government.

Unless this influence is guarded against by missionaries and their directors, the result is that the missions have a *two-fold object of pursuit*; the one, that simple and sublime spiritual object of the ambassador for Christ mentioned in the text, "persuading men to be reconciled to God;" the other, the reorganizing, by various direct means, of the structure of that social system, of which the converts form a part. Thus the object of the missions becomes more or less complicated, leading to a complicated, burdensome, and perhaps expensive course of measures for its attainment.

I may be allowed, therefore, to invite attention to what is conceived to be *our true and only office and work in missions to the heathen*. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The ambassadors here spoken of were missionaries—missionaries to the heathen, for such were Paul and his associates; sent, instead of Christ the Mediator, on a ministry withheld from angels, to plead with rebellious men to become reconciled to God. They are ambassadors sent on the same general errand that brought the Lord Jesus from heaven, and their commission is to proclaim abroad the fact, history, design and effect of his atonement, and bring

its renovating power to bear as widely as possible upon the human race.

It will be necessary to dwell a short time on the leading aspects of this enterprise. And,

1. The vocation of the missionary who is sent to the heathen, is not the same with that of the settled pastor.

The work of human salvation is one of vast extent, whether we regard the time it is to occupy, the objects upon which it operates, the agents it employs, or the results which are to be accomplished. And it is performed with that regard for order and gradual developement, which generally characterizes the works of God. Upon the Lord Jesus it devolved to make the atonement, thus preparing the way, as none else could do, for reconciling man to his Maker; and then He returned to the heaven whence he came. Upon his immediate disciples it then devolved to make proclamation of the atonement, and its kindred and dependent doctrines, throughout the world, the whole of which world, excepting Judea, was then heathen. This they were to do as his representatives and ambassadors; and to expedite the work, they were furnished with the gift of tongues, and an extraordinary divine influence attended their preaching. Their commission embraced only the proclamation of the gospel and planting its institutions. As soon as the gospel by their means had gained a footing in any one district of country, they left the work in charge to others, called elders and also bishops or overseers of the flock and church of God, whom they ordained for the purpose. Sometimes they did not remain even long enough to provide spiritual guides for the churches they had planted. "For this cause," says Paul to Titus, "left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." The elders were the pastors of the new churches. Elsewhere the apostle speaks of different departments of labor and influence assigned to the ministers

of Christ. He says that when Christ ascended up on high he gave gifts unto men; to some apostles, to some prophets, to some evangelists, to some pastors and teachers. Whatever was the peculiar office of 'prophets' and 'teachers,' none can doubt that 'evangelists' were fellow-laborers of the apostles in the missionary work, and that 'pastors' had the stated care and instruction of particular churches. Now missionaries are the true and proper successors of the apostles and evangelists, and their sphere of duty is not the same with that of pastors, who are successors, in their sacred functions, not so much of the apostles and evangelists, as of the elders and bishops. It enters into the nature of the pastor's relation, that he remain or be intended to remain long the spiritual instructor of some one people. It is indeed as really his business to call sinners to repentance, as it is that of the missionary; but, owing to his more permanent relations, and to the fact that he is constituted the religious guide and instructor of his converts during the whole period of their earthly pilgrimage, his range of duty in respect to them is more comprehensive than that of the missionary in respect to his converts. The pastor is charged, in common with the missionary, with reconciling men to God; and he has also an additional charge, arising from the peculiar circumstances of his relation, with respect to their growth in grace and sanctification. But the missionary's *great* business in his personal labors, is with the unconverted. His embassy is to the rebellious, to beseech them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. His vocation, as a soldier of the cross, is to make conquests, and to go on, in the name of his divine Master, 'conquering and to conquer;' committing the security and permanency of his conquests to another class of men created expressly for the purpose. The idea of *continued conquest* is fundamental in missions to the heathen, and is vital to their spiritual life and efficiency. It will doubtless be found on inquiry, that missions among the heathen have always ceased to be healthful and efficient,

have ceased to evince the true missionary spirit in its strength, whenever they have ceased to be actively aggressive upon the kingdom of darkness.

In a word, the missionary prepares new fields for pastors; and when they are thus prepared, and competent pastors are upon the ground, he ought himself to move onward,—the pioneer in effect of a Christian civilization—but in office, work and spirit, an ambassador for Christ, to preach the gospel where it has not been preached. And, whatever may be said with respect to pastors, it is true of the missionary, that he is to keep himself as free as possible from entanglements with literature, science and commerce, and with questions of church government, politics and social order. For,

2. The object and work of the missionary are pre-eminently spiritual.

His embassy and message are as really from the other world, as if he were an angel from heaven. He who devotes himself to the work of foreign missions, comes thereby under peculiar engagements and obligations. His situation is in some important respects peculiar, compared with that of all others. His sphere of action lies beyond the bounds of his native land, beyond the bounds of Christendom, where society and the family and human nature lie all in ruins. As the great Originator and Lord of the enterprise came from the realms of heavenly blessedness to this world when it was one universal moral waste, so his representatives and ambassadors have now to go from those portions of the earth that have been illuminated by his gospel to regions that are as yet unvisited by these benign influences. They are therefore required preëminently to renounce the world. From the nature of the case they make a greater sacrifice of worldly blessings, than their brethren at home can do, however much disposed. They forsake their native land and the loved scenes of their youthful days. Oceans separate them from their relatives and friends. They encounter

torrid heats and strange diseases. They traverse pathless wilds, and are exposed to burning suns and chilling night-damps, to rain or snow. Yet these things, when in their most repulsive forms, are reckoned by missionaries as the least of the trials appertaining to their vocation. The foreign missionary's greatest sacrifices and trials are *social and religious*. It is here that he has a severity of trial, which even the domestic missionary ordinarily cannot have. Whatever the devoted servant of Christ upon the frontiers may endure for the present, he sees the waves of a christian civilization not far distant rolling onward, and knows that there will soon be all around him gospel institutions and a Christian community. But it is not so with the foreign missionary. It requires great strength of faith in Christ for him to look at his rising family, and then with unruffled feelings towards the future. True, he sees the gospel taking hold of minds and hearts in consequence of his ministry, and souls converted and reconciled to God; he gathers churches; he sees around him the germs of a future Christian civilization. But then, owing to the imperfect and disordered state of society in heathen communities, he dares not anticipate so much social advancement for two or three generations to come, as would make it pleasant to think of leaving his children among the people for whose spiritual well-being he delights to spend his own strength and years. And then his heart yearns oftentimes to be braced and cheered by social Christian fellowship of a higher order than he finds among his converts from heathenism. It is not the 'flesh-pots of Egypt' he looks back upon, nor any of the pleasant things that used to gratify his *senses* in his native land; but he does sometimes think of the kindred spirits he would find in that land, and of the high intellectual and spiritual fellowship he would enjoy in their society, and how it would refresh and strengthen his own mind and heart. Often there is a feeling of weakness and faintness arising from the want

of such fellowship, which is the most painful part of his sufferings. The foreign missionary is obliged, indeed, to act præeminently upon the doctrine of a future life, and of God's supreme and universal government, and to make a deliberate sacrifice of time for eternity, and of earth for heaven. And this he does as an act of duty to his Redeemer, for the sake of extending the influence of his redemption, and bringing its reconciling and saving power to bear upon the myriads of immortal souls dwelling beyond the utmost verge of the Christian church.

And thus the foreign missionary is driven, as it were, by the very circumstances of his position, as well as led by his commission and his convictions of duty, to concentrate his attention and energies upon the soul, ruined though immortal. And truly it is a vast and mighty ruin he beholds—more affecting to look upon in the light of its own proper eternity, than would be the desolation of all the cities in the world. It is too vast a ruin for a feeble band to attempt the restoration of every part at once. As Nehemiah concentrated his energies upon rebuilding the walls of the city of his fathers, rightly concluding that if the walls were rebuilt and threw their encouraging protection around, the other portions of the city would rise of course; so the missionary, as a thoughtful and wise man, sets himself to reconcile the alienated heart to God, believing that that point being gained, and the principle of obedience implanted, and a highly spiritual religion introduced, a social renovation will be sure to follow. He considers not, therefore, so much the relations of man to man, as of man to God; not so much the relations and interests of time, as those of eternity; not so much the intellectual and social degradation and debasement, the result of barbarism or of iron-handed oppression, as the alienation and estrangement of the heart of man from his Maker, and the deadly influence of hateful and destroying passions upon his soul. As when a house is burning in the dead of night, our first and great concern is not for the house, but for

the sleeping dwellers within ; so the missionary's first and great concern is for the *soul*, to save it from impending wrath.

And the *means* he employs in this ministry of reconciliation, are as single and spiritual as the end he has in view. He *preaches the cross of Christ*. The apostle Paul declares that this was his grand theme. And it is remarkable how experience is bringing modern missionaries to the same result. Their grand agent is oral instruction ; their grand theme is the cross. And now, perhaps not less than in the days of the apostles, the Holy Spirit appears to restrict his *converting* influences among the heathen chiefly to this species of agency, and to this grand theme. Excepting in the schools, the usefulness of books is chiefly with those whose hearts have been in some measure moved and roused by the preached word. It appears to be the will of the great Redeemer, who came in person to begin the work, that his salvation shall every where be proclaimed in person by his ambassadors, and that his message of grace shall have all the impressiveness of look and voice and manner, which they are able to give it. After the manner of their illustrious predecessor, they must teach publicly, and from house to house, and warn every one night and day with tears. The necessity of this in order to reconcile rebellious men to God, has not been diminished by the multiplication of books through the press. Well-authenticated cases of *conversion* among pagans, by means of books alone, not excepting even the Scriptures, are exceedingly rare. By the divine appointment, there must also be the living preacher ; and his preaching must not be "with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

You see, then, Brethren, the high spiritual calling of the missionary. At the very threshold of his work, he is required, in a præeminent degree, to renounce the world. His message, wherein lies his duty and all his hope of success, is concerning the cross of Christ ; and the object

of it is to restore the lost spiritual relation between man and God. The impression he is designing to make is directly upon the soul. And his work lies so altogether out of the common range of worldly ideas, and even of the ideas of many professed Christians, that multitudes have no faith in it; it is to them like a root out of a dry ground, and they see no form nor comeliness in it, and nothing that should lead them to desire it. Nor is it until the civilizing results come out, that these unsanctified or very partially sanctified persons can give the missionary work any degree of their respect.

The necessity of connecting a system of *education* with modern missions, is not inconsistent with the view we have taken of the true theory of missions to the heathen. The apostles had greatly the advantage of us in procuring elders, or pastors for their churches. In their day the most civilized portions of the world were heathen—as if to show the weakness of mere human learning and wisdom; and the missionary labors of the apostles and their associates, so far as we have authentic accounts of them, were in the best educated and in some respects highly educated portions of the earth. Wherever they went, therefore, they found mind in comparatively an erect, intelligent, reasoning posture; and it would seem that men could easily have been found among their converts, who, with some special but brief instruction concerning the gospel, would be fitted to take the pastoral care of churches. But it appears that, until schools expressly for training pastors were in operation,—as ere long they were at Alexandria, Caesarea, Antioch, Edessa, and elsewhere,—it pleased God essentially to aid in qualifying men for the office of pastors by a miraculous agency; the Holy Ghost exerting upon them a supernatural influence, by which their understandings were strengthened and spiritually illuminated, and they gifted with powers of utterance.

But, at the present time, the whole civilized world is at least nominally Christian, and modern missions must be

prosecuted among uncivilized, or at least partially civilized tribes and nations, from which useful ideas have in great measure perished. Even in those heathen nations which make the greatest pretensions to learning, as in India, we find but little truth existing on any subject. Their history, chronology, geography, astronomy, their notions of matter and mind, and their views of creation and providence, religion and morals, are exceedingly destitute of truth. And yet it is not so much a *vacuity* of mind here that we have to contend with, as it is *plenitude of error*—the unrestrained accumulations and perversions of depraved intellect for three thousand years. But among savage heathens, it is *vacuity* of mind, and not a *plenitude*, we have to operate upon. For, the savage has few ideas, sees only the objects just about him, perceives nothing of the relations of things, and occupies his thoughts only about his physical experiences and wants. He knows nothing of geography, astronomy, history, nothing of his own spiritual nature and destiny, and nothing of God.

In these circumstances and without the power of conferring miraculous gifts, modern missionaries are constrained to resort to education in order to procure pastors for their churches. They select the most promising candidates, and take the usual methods to train them to stand alone and firm in the gospel ministry, and to be competent spiritual guides to others. This creates, it will be perceived, a necessity for a system of education of greater or less extent in each of the missions, embracing even a considerable number of elementary schools. The whole is designed to secure, through the divine blessing, a competent native ministry, who shall aid missionaries in their work, and at length take their places. The schools, moreover, of every grade, are, or ought to be so many preaching places, so many congregations of youth, to whom, often with parents and friends attending, the gospel is more or less formally proclaimed.

I have thus endeavored, my Brethren, to set before you the foreign missionary enterprise in what I conceive to be its true scriptural character; as an enterprise, the object of which, and the sole object, is the reconciling of rebellious men in heathen lands to God.

And what is true of the individual missionary, is of course equally true of the Missionary Society, which directs his labors and is the medium of his support. The Society sends forth men to be evangelists, rather than permanent pastors; and when pastors are required by the progress and success of the work, it seeks them among native converts on the ground. And herein it differs from the appropriate usages of the Home Missionary Society, which, operating on feeble churches within Christian communities, or in districts that are soon to be covered with a Christian civilization of some sort, sends forth its preachers all to become settled pastors as soon as possible. The foreign missionary work is in fact a vast *evangelism*; with conquest, in order to extend the bounds of the Redeemer's kingdom, for its object; having as little to do with the relations of this life and the things of the world and sense, and as few relations to the kingdoms of this world, as is consistent with the successful prosecution of its one grand object—the restoring, in the immortal soul of man, of that blessed attraction to the Centre of the Spiritual Universe which was lost at the fall.

This method of conducting foreign missions, besides its evident conformity to Scripture, is supported by various weighty considerations.

1. It is the only method that, as a system of measures, will commend itself strongly to the consciences and respect of mankind.

The first mission sent forth under the care of the American Board, was such a mission. And it was sent to the subjects of a nation, with which our country was then unhappily at war. But the missionaries were regarded on all hands as belonging preëminently to a kingdom not of this world, and having an object of a

purely spiritual nature. And when, notwithstanding this, the policy of the East Indian government would have sent them away, it was this that gave convincing and overwhelming force to the following appeal made by our brethren to the governor of Bombay :

“ We entreat you by the spiritual miseries of the heathen, who are daily perishing before your eyes, and under your Excellency’s government, not to prevent us from preaching Christ to them. We entreat you by the blood of Jesus which he shed to redeem them,—as ministers of Him, who has all power in heaven and earth, and who with his farewell and ascending voice commanded his ministers to go and teach all nations, we entreat you not to prohibit us from teaching these heathens. By all the principles of our holy religion, by which you hope to be saved, we entreat you not to hinder us from preaching the same religion to these perishing idolaters. By all the solemnities of the judgment day, when your Excellency must meet your heathen subjects before God’s tribunal, we entreat you not to hinder us from preaching to them that gospel, which is able to prepare them, as well as you, for that awful day.”

Nothing but a consciousness of the high spirituality of their object and the impossibility of connecting it with questions of a secular nature, imparted boldness to our brethren to make this appeal, and gave it favor and efficacy in the high places of power. And it is this, which lately preserved our brethren on Mount Lebanon harmless amid the fury and carnage of a civil war. And this it is that imparts a degree of inviolability to the persons and efforts of Protestant heralds of the cross among all the nations which respect their religion. It is the grand predominance of the *spiritual* in their characters and pursuits, showing that they really do belong to a kingdom not of this world, and are not to be involved in the conflicting relations and interests of earthly communities. English statesmen in India acknowledge, that the general prevalence of Christianity in that country would at length make it

impossible for their nation to hold the country in subjection, and yet they encourage the labors of the missionary. This they do because the missionary's *object*, whatever be the known *tendency* of his labors, is not to change the civil relations of the people, but to give them the gospel and save their souls; and because these statesmen are convinced in their consciences, that this is an object of unquestionable benevolence and obligation, for which Christ died, for which the ministry was instituted, which at this day is to be countenanced and encouraged at all events by every man claiming the name of a Christian; and which, however humbling it shall prove in its results to avaricious and ambitious nations, cannot be otherwise than beneficial on the broad scale of the world and to the great family of man.

2. This method of conducting missions is the only one, on which missionaries can be obtained in large numbers, and keep cheerfully in the field.

For objects that are not spiritual and eternal, men will seldom renounce the world for themselves and their families, as missionaries must do. Mere philosophers have never gone as missionaries; and seldom do mere philanthropists go into the heathen world, nor would they remain long, should they happen to go. Nor will a merely impulsive, unreflecting piety ever bring about a steady, persevering, laborious, self-denying mission. It generally gives out before the day for embarkation, or retires from the field before the language is acquired and the battle fairly commenced. Nothing but the grand object of reconciling men to God, with a view to their eternal salvation, and the happiness and glory thus resulting to Christ's kingdom, will call any considerable number of missionaries into the foreign field, and keep them cheerfully there. And it is necessary that this object be made to stand out alone, in its greatness and majesty, towering above all other objects, as the hoary-headed monarch of the Alps towers above the inferior mountains around him. It is not fine conceptions of the beautiful and orderly in human

society that will fire the zeal of a missionary ; it is not rich and glowing conceptions of the life and duties of a pastor ; it is not broad and elevated views of theological truth, nor precise and comprehensive views of the relations of that truth to moral subjects. It is something more than all this, often the result of a different cast of mind and combination of ideas. The true missionary character indeed is based upon a single sublime conception—that of *reconciling immortal souls to God*. To gain this with an effective practical power, the missionary needs himself to have passed from death unto life, and to have had deep experience of his own enmity to God and hell-desert, and of the vast transforming agency of the reconciling grace of God in Christ. As this conception has more of moral greatness and sublimity in it than any other that ever entered the mind of man, no missionary can attain to the highest elevation and dignity of his calling, unless he have strong mental power and a taste for the morally sublime. This the apostle Paul had. What conceptions of his office and work and of spiritual things animated the great soul of that apostle ! “ Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”—“ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”—“ Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.”—“ Able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

To make persevering and useful missionaries, however, it is not necessary that the power of thought and of spiritual apprehension should come nearly up to that of the apostle Paul. But there should be a similar cast of mind, similar views and feelings, and a similar character. There should be a steady and sober, but real enthusiasm, sustained by a strongly spiritualized doctrinal experience,

and by the "powers of the world to come," intent upon reconciling men to God, from a conviction of its transcendent importance.

Such men must compose the great body of every mission, or it will not be worth supporting in the field; and the only way such men can be induced to engage in the work, is by having the idea of spiritual conquest, through the cross of Christ, the predominant and characteristic idea of the enterprise. That will attract their attention while they are preparing for the ministry; that will enlist their consciences and draw their hearts; that will constrain them to refuse every call to settle at home, however inviting; and if they have learning and eloquence, that will lead them the more to desire to go where Christ has not been preached, where useful talent of every kind will find the widest scope for exercise.

Nor will any other scheme of missions, that was ever devised, keep missionaries cheerfully in the field. It is only by having the eye intent on the relations the heathen sustain to God, and on their reconciliation to him, and by cultivating the spirit of dependence on God and the habit of looking to him for success, that the piety of a mission can be kept flourishing, its bond of union perfect, its active powers all in full, harmonious and happy exercise. And unless these results are secured, missionaries, like the soldiers of a disorganized army, will lose their courage, their energy and zeal, their serenity and health, and will leave the field. Alas for a mission, where the absorbing object of attention with any of its members is any thing else, than how Christ crucified shall be preached to the heathen so as most effectually to persuade them to be reconciled to God.

3. This method of conducting missions is the only one, that will subjugate the heathen world to God.

No other will be found mighty to pull down the strong holds of the god of this world. The weapons of our warfare must be spiritual. The enemy will laugh at the shaking of a spear, at diplomatic skill, at commerce,

learning, philanthropy, and every scheme of social order and refinement. He stands in fear of nothing but the cross of Christ, and therefore we must rely on nothing else. With that we may boldly pass all his outworks and entrenchments, and assail his very citadel. So did Philip, when he preached Jesus as the way of reconciliation to the eunuch; so did Peter, when preaching to the centurion; so did Apollos, when preaching to the Greeks; so did Paul, through his whole missionary career. It is wonderful what faith those ancient worthies had in the power of a simple statement of the doctrine of salvation through the blood of Christ. But they had felt its power in their own hearts, they saw it on the hearts of others, and they found reason to rely on nothing else. And the experience of modern missions has done much to teach the inefficacy of all things else, separate from this. Who does not know that the only cure for the deep-seated disorders of mankind must be wrought in the heart, and that nothing operates there like the doctrine of salvation by the cross of Christ? This is true in the most highly civilized communities; but perhaps it is specially true among benighted heathens. In their deplorable moral degradation, they need just such an argument, striking even the very senses, and convincing of sin, of their own lost state, and of the love of God. Nothing else will be found like that to bridge the mighty gulf which separates their thoughts from God and the spiritual world. Nothing else will concentrate, like that, the rays of divine truth and grace upon their frozen affections. With the truth, that God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life, we go forth through the heathen world; and, with any thing like the faith in its efficacy through the Holy Spirit which the apostles had, we shall be blessed with much of their success. Yes, my Brethren, this is the only effectual way of prosecuting missions among the heathen—*holding up* CHRIST AS THE ONLY SAVIOR OF LOST SINNERS. It

requires the fewest men, the least expense, the shortest time. It makes the least demand for learning in the great body of the laborers. It involves the least complication in means and measures. It is the only course that has the absolute promise of the presence of Christ, or that may certainly look for the aid of the Holy Spirit. It keeps Christ constantly before the missionary's own soul, as an object of intensest interest and desire, with a vast sanctifying, sustaining, animating influence on his own mind and preaching. It furnishes him with a power transcending all that human wisdom ever contrived, for rousing and elevating the soul of man and drawing it heavenward—the idea of LOVE, infinite and infinitely disinterested, personified in the Lord Jesus, and suffering to the death to save rebellious and ruined man! And if the doctrine comes glowing from our own experience, we shall not fail to get the attention of the heathen, and our success among them will far exceed what we might expect among gospel-hardened sinners here at home. I might dwell long on the history of missions, ancient and modern, in the most satisfactory illustration of this point, did the time permit; but it is not necessary.

Let me add, that there is no way so direct and effectual as this, to remove the social disorders and evils that afflict the heathen world; indeed, there is no other way. Every specific evil and sin does not need and cannot have a separate remedy, for they are all streams from one fountain, having a common origin in a depraved and rebellious heart. Urge home, then, the divinely appointed remedy for a wicked heart; purify the fountain; let love to God and man fill the soul; and soon its influence will appear in every department and relation of life. If reforms in religion and morals are not laid deep in the heart, they will be deceptive, and at all events transient. The evil spirit will return in some form, and with seven-fold power. New England owes her strong repugnance to slavery, and her universal rejection of that monstrous evil, to the highly evangelical nature of her preaching. And

were the whole southern section of our own land, or even a considerable portion of it, favored with such highly evangelical preaching, slavery could not there long exist. But in heathen lands especially, an effective public sentiment against sin, in any of its outward forms, can be created no where, except in the church; and it can be there created only by preaching Christ in his offices and works of love and mercy, with the aid of the ordinances he has given for the benefit of his disciples, especially the sacrament of his supper. Thus at length, even in barbarous heathen lands, the force of piety in the hearts of the individual members of the church will be raised above that of ignorance, prejudice, the power of custom and usage, the blinding influence of self-interest falsely apprehended, and the ridicule and frowns of an ungodly and perverse world. Indeed, if we would make any thing of converts in pagan lands, we must bring them to the ordinances of the gospel, and into the church, as soon as they give satisfactory evidence of regeneration; for they are too child-like, too weak, too ignorant to be left exposed to the dangers that exist out of the fold, even until they shall have learned all fundamental truths. And besides, the school of Christ for young converts from heathenism, *stands within the fold*, and *there*, certainly, the compassionate Savior would have them all gathered, and carried in the arms, and cherished "even as a nurse cherisheth her children."

Finally; This method of conducting missions is the only one, that will unite in this work the energies of the churches at home.

Well understood, this will unite the energies of the churches—so far as Christians can be induced to prosecute missions for the purpose of reconciling men to God. Making this the grand aim of missions, and pressing the love of Christ home upon the hearts and consciences of men, as the grand means of effecting this, will certainly commend itself to the understandings and feelings of all intelligent Christians. Not only will a large number of good and faithful missionaries be obtain-

ed, but they will be supported, and prayed for, and made the objects of daily interest and concern. And how delightful it is to think, that the Head of the church has been pleased to make the object and work of missions so entirely simple, so spiritual, and so beyond the possibility of exception, that evangelical Christians of every nation and name can unite in its promotion. But if we change the form of the work, and extend the range of its objects of direct pursuit, and of course multiply the measures and influences by which it is to be advanced, we then open the door for honest and invincible diversities of opinion among the best of men, and render it impossible that there should be united effort, on a scale at all commensurate with the work, and for a long period. The church militant becomes divided and weak, and is easily paralyzed and thwarted in its movements by the combined and united legions of the Prince of darkness.

It would seem, therefore, that missions to the heathen must have a highly spiritual nature and developement, or prove utterly impracticable and abortive. Such, it is believed, are the convictions of all who have had much experience in such enterprises. Unless missions have this nature and developement in a very high degree, they will not commend themselves strongly to the consciences and respect of mankind; they will neither command the requisite number of laborers, nor keep them cheerfully in the field; they will prove inadequate to the subjugation of the heathen world to God; nor will they unite in this great enterprize the energies and prayers of the churches. In a word, they will not continue long to exist, unless Christ the Lamb of God be in them, reconciling the world unto himself, and causing his servants to make the salvation of the souls of men their all-commanding end and aim. Men may *resolve* that it shall be otherwise; but their purposes, however decided, will be in vain against the unalterable laws, which God has given the work of missions to the heathen.

BELOVED BROTHER,—In the system of missions, with which you are soon to be connected, the aim has been, and is more and more, as experience is acquired, to prosecute the work on the principles advocated in this discourse. So far as your own influence is concerned, see that the system be rendered still more spiritual in its temper, objects, and measures. See, too, that your own renunciation of the world is entire before you enter upon your self-denying work, and that it be your determination to know nothing among the heathen but Christ and him crucified. Only by looking constantly unto Jesus, will you be able to run with patience the race set before you. As an ambassador of Christ, sent to plead with men in his stead to be reconciled to God, see that you are true to your vocation, and faithful to your trust, and that you never descend from the elevated ground you occupy. Whatever oscillations in public sentiment there may be from time to time in the Christian mind at home, you need not fear, if your character, preaching and influence are formed on the New Testament, that you will be forgotten in the contributions and prayers of God's people. At all events, be faithful unto death, and whatever be your lot here below, the result in eternity will be more blessed to you, than it is possible for your mind now to conceive, or your heart to desire.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—Let it be our prayer, that God will be pleased to strengthen our own faith in the realities of the unseen world. Then shall we be better able to pray as we ought for our missionary brethren, that they may be intent on their single but great object of winning souls to Christ, and be so imbued with the spirit of Christ, that his image shall be fully stamped on all their converts. Let us urge upon our brethren among the heathen the imperative duty of making full proof of their ministry as *missionaries*, rather than as *pastors*; and let us lay upon them "no greater burden," than the "necessary things" appertaining to their high and peculiar vocation.

We must indeed hold them to the principle, that they shall treat those only as loyal subjects of our infinite Sovereign, who give evidence of hearty submission and reconciliation ; but we will leave it to their better-informed judgments to determine,—in the remote, vast and varied, and to us almost unknown fields of their labors,—what is and what ought to be satisfactory evidence of actual reconciliation. Then will our brethren rejoice in having a simple, well-sustained, and glorious enterprise before them, and also “for the consolation” of the liberty conceded to them by the “elders” and the “whole church.” In this good old way, marked with the footsteps of the apostles, there is hope for the world, for the whole world, that it may be reconciled to God. And when the principles of love and obedience are once restored to men, and men are at peace with God, and united to Him, then will they be at peace with one another. Then wars will cease, and all oppression. Then the crooked in human affairs shall be made straight and the rough places plain, the valleys shall be exalted and the mountains and hills made low, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh see it together.

“ In one sweet symphony of praise,
Gentile and Jew shall then unite ;
And Infidelity, ashamed,
Sink in the abyss of endless night.

“ Soon Afric’s long-enslaved sons
Shall join with Europe’s polished race,
To celebrate, in different tongues,
The glories of redeeming grace.

“ From east to west, from north to south,
Emmanuel’s kingdom shall extend ;
And every man, in every face,
Shall meet a brother and a friend.”